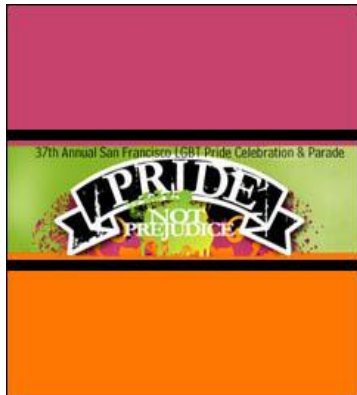


QUEER CULTURAL CENTER: THE CENTER FOR LGBT ART AND CULTURE



It is not often that an arts organization becomes a symbol of a successful struggle in gender identity and cultural equity. The history of the Queer Cultural Center (QCC) embodies the movement of the lesbian, gay,

bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) population of the San Francisco Bay Area for recognition, fellowship, solidarity and self-expression. In fifteen years, QCC has grown into a vital organization with networks and services that impact constituents around the world.

MISSION STATEMENT

In order to appreciate its achievements, it is important to examine the mission of QCC:

Founded in 1993, QCC is a multiracial community-building organization that fosters the artistic, economic and cultural development of San Francisco's LGBT community. We implement our mission by operating programs that commission and present Queer artists, that promote the development of culturally diverse Queer arts organizations and that document significant Queer arts events taking place in San Francisco.

By presenting, exhibiting, screening and documenting queer artists' work, QCC contributes to the development of a multicultural perspective on the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender experience.

QCC's website was launched in 1998 to expand its audience world-wide and to promote the work of significant LGBT artists.

GIVING DIVERSITY A VOICE

Through its programs and activities, QCC has empowered LGBT communities by giving voice and support to a significant population in the Bay Area, and to explore the myriad factors that determine LGBT artistic expressions and its cultural implications and impact. An important factor in this effort is the multicultural and multiracial makeup of QCC's board of directors, whose bylaws mandate that a majority of its members must be people of color.

ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

From the beginning, QCC has been persistent in addressing the equitable distribution of funds from city government.

In 1993 friends in the arts and politics of the lesbian and gay movement based in San Francisco joined forces to create the San



Francisco Lesbian and Gay Center for Art and Culture (SFLGCAC).^{*} The group shared a dream of establishing a repository for actual works of art and a place to incubate ideas relating to gay culture. In the next few years, SFLGCAC allied with existing cultural centers^{**} to form the Consortium of San Francisco Community Cultural Centers, which later morphed into the San Francisco Arts Democratic Club in order to advocate for charter reform, a cultural facility bond and to gain access to the Hotel Tax Fund. These efforts were aimed to secure a more equitable share of public funding that had favored the major arts institutions showcasing European traditions. Proponents of cultural equity strongly felt that the changing demographics and multicultural makeup of San Francisco mandated a different paradigm. In 1997, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved a line item from the city's Hotel Tax Fund to be used by the ethnic



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cultural centers. QCC has since been able to successfully partner with many cultural centers and organizations to expand economic opportunities while providing visibility to the city's art and culture.

PROGRAMS AND FESTIVALS

Programs that QCC provides include staging an annual month-long multidisciplinary National Queer Arts Festival, first launched in 1998. The 2008 Festival attracted more than 65,000 people. To date, these Festivals have presented more than 400 different events featuring over 2000 Queer artists including Francis Bacon, Bill T. Jones, Alice Walker, Robert Rauschenberg, Ester Hernandez, Adrienne Rich, Marga Gomez, Justin Chin, Cherrie Moraga and Dorothy Allison. Many of these artists are featured in the six galleries found in [QCC's](#) website. Each LGBT artist affiliated with San Francisco is introduced through biographies, artist's statements, links, and samples of work. This online repository fulfilled an important goal QCC set out to accomplish.

QCC conducts "Creating Queer Community," a program that assists in the creation of art work. QCC began operating this program in 2000 by awarding five small commissions ranging from \$500 to \$1500. Since then, QCC has commissioned approximately 60 LGBT artists to create new works that authentically express the community's diverse experiences. Over the past seven years, the vast majority of these commissions have been awarded to culturally-specific and gender-specific individual artists whose work expresses the experiences of Queers of color, Lesbians and Transgenders. The commissioned work has broadened the Queer community's understanding of the fluid nature of racial and gender identities and has provided many insights into what people of different races, gender identities and ages actually think. QCC has received major grants from the Haas Foundations' Creative Work Fund, the Gerbode Foundation and the San Francisco Foundation to expand its commissioning activities.

QCC's programs and services also include Queer Multicultural Arts Development (QMAD) that started in 1999. QMAD provides fundraising and

other technical assistance to emerging culturally-specific and gender-specific Queer arts groups. Today, this service enabled Transgender and Queer arts organizations of color to secure government and foundation grants exceeding \$1 million.

The California Arts Council (CAC) is proud of QCC's achievements in addressing the difficult topics of gender identity and cultural equity, and supported QCC's early works through CAC's former Multicultural Entry Program.

* Political activist and photographer, Carol Stuart; grant writer and arts consultant, Jeff Jones; artist Rudy Lemcke, and set designer and assistant artistic director for the gay performance group Theater Rhinoceros, Pam Peniston, had all served on Mayor Agnos' Cultural Affairs Task Force in the late 1980s. They were joined by photographer Greg Day; painter Lenore Chinn; curator Adrienne Fuzee; filmmaker Osa Hidalgo-de la Riva; photographer Freddie Niem and performance artist Blackberri, to form the first board of directors of the San Francisco Center for Lesbian Gay Bi and Transgender Art and Culture.

** This included the Center for African and African American Art and Culture, the Bayview Opera House, the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, the Indian Center for All Nations, South of Market Cultural Center and the Chinese Culture Center.

The Queer Cultural Center is currently a recipient of the CAC's [Creating Cultural Value Program](#) (CPV), which supports projects making a positive contribution in rural and underserved communities. For more information on CPV, contact Arts Specialist **Lucero Arellano** at larellano@cac.ca.gov. QCC is also funded by the CAC's ARRA Arts Recovery Grant managed by John Seto, reachable through jseto@cac.ca.gov.

